



New Farmers. We're here for you.

New and beginning farmers and ranchers are as diverse as American agriculture itself. New farmers are growing traditional crops and new varieties, organic produce and heirloom products. They are part of row-crop farms - employing cutting-edge technology and equipment - and community supported agriculture programs - delivering fresh products directly to their neighbors. They are raising beef, pork, dairy cattle, poultry, and fish on operations of every size.

Our diversity, youth engagement, and types of agriculture are all increasing, and growing the next generation of agriculture has never been more exciting or more urgent than it is right now. And as the average age of farmers and ranchers in America continues to rise, the question of how we build our bench in agriculture becomes ever more important.

Here at USDA, we are working hard to make sure we are ready to meet the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

This web site is just the beginning. What will you find here?

[➤ Let's get started](#)

[➤ Getting Started](#)

[➤ Education and Assistance](#)

[➤ Access to Land and Capital](#)

[➤ Managing Risk](#)

[➤ Protecting the Environment](#)

[➤ Expanding Business](#)

[➤ Resources and Tools](#)

[➤ Get Connected](#)



Getting Started with the Basics

Once you are ready to take that first step, come meet us at USDA. Our team of talented employees know the programs inside and out that are available to help you get started as a new farmer or rancher. USDA employees can share their expertise, advice on getting started, and a roadmap on how USDA can partner with new farmers or ranchers as you begin or expand your business.

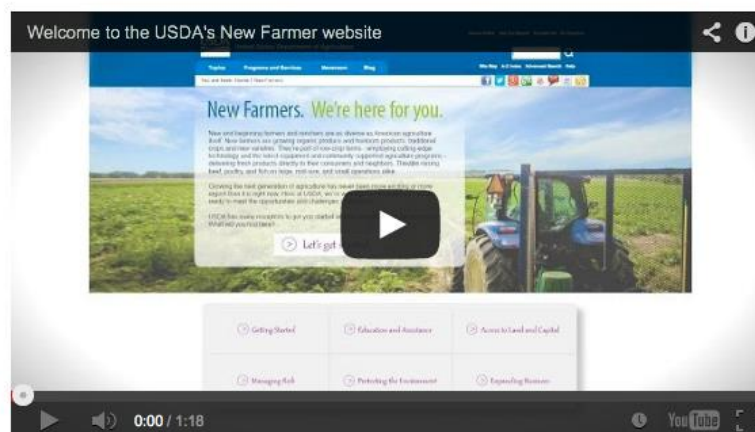
USDA offices are located across the country, throughout the communities that they serve.



"It is our responsibility to assist beginning farmers and ranchers, including - women, minorities, socially disadvantaged, our returning veterans who are interested in reconnecting with the land. We have a responsibility to enable them to start and stay in the business of agriculture."

- Secretary Tom Vilsack

Welcome to the New Farmers Web Site



Find a USDA Service Center Near You

USDA Service Centers are where you can access some of the most critical services offered by USDA, including financial assistance, help finalizing a business plan, and conservation planning.

Note: Some service centers may not offer all services. Contact the center before making the trip if you have any questions.

Cooperative Extension

USDA and agricultural colleges around the country work together to support an extensive network of [state, regional, and county Cooperative Extension offices](#), which can help answer questions you may have about your operation and common issues faced by agricultural producers. These offices also conduct workshops and educational events for the agricultural community.

Be Included

As a new farmland owner or renter, you are encouraged to visit your [local Farm Service Agency](#) office to establish a farm record. The records can help you find USDA programs that can provide assistance for your operation.

Help Developing a Business Plan

One of the most important things that you can have is a good business plan.

For more information, please see [pages 22-31 of "Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans" \(PDF, 3.5MB\)](#).

Ag Risk & Farm Management Library

USDA funds the Web-based [Ag Risk and Farm Management Library](#), which helps agricultural producers and professionals quickly find the information they need on risk management, marketing, financial management, and more. It also has more than 2,700 crop budgets representing over 280 crops, and more than 400 livestock budgets from over 30 states. Crop budgets can be a guide as you make your business plan.

Meet the Next Generation...

19-Year-Old Hopes to Retire Early and Farm



Austin Midkiff thinks, breathes and lives farming. It's all he has done since he was six years old. By the time he was 14, he took over his grandparents' 10-acre farm in Springdale, West Virginia. "When I turned 16 my grandparents sold everything to me in order to teach me how to get things on my own and start from scratch," said Midkiff. "It's hard starting off."

For more, [read the entire blog](#).

[➤ Continue to Education and Assistance](#)



Research, Technical Assistance and Education

USDA offers a wealth of information for new farmers and ranchers. This includes providing cutting edge research in the field of agriculture, collecting and sharing information on markets, providing technical assistance with common issues on the farm, and offering programs to help support new farmers and ranchers in local communities.

As a new farmer or rancher, you can use these resources to plan your business, address risk, assess opportunities for growth and expansion, and connect with your community.

As an organization looking to support a new generation of farming and ranching, you can find tools to support you in your work and opportunities to partner with USDA.

For Farmers and Ranchers

USDA Research, Education, and Economics

USDA is dedicated to the creation of a safe, sustainable, competitive U.S. food and fiber system and strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis and education - offering cutting edge research, economic insight, and timely and accurate statistics for the agricultural and consumer community.

For more information, please visit USDA's [Research, Education and Economics \(REE\) Web site](#).

Ag Census

Since 1840, the U.S. government has collected important [census data on agriculture](#).

Cooperative Extension

USDA and agricultural colleges around the country work together to support an extensive network of state, regional, and county [Cooperative Extension offices](#), which can help answer questions you may have about your operation and common issues faced by agricultural producers. These offices also conduct workshops and educational events for the agricultural community.

Alternatively, you can also crowd-source research-proven and science-based knowledge via eXtension, the Extension system's [national online interactive learning environment](#).

Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program

USDA supports extension agents on American Indian reservations to assist in developing profitable farming and ranching techniques.

For more information, please visit the [NIFA Tribal Institutions Web site](#).

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

[SARE's grants and education programs](#) promote profitability; stewardship of the land, air, and water; and quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and their communities.

For more information, please visit the [NIFA Tribal Institutions website](#).

Food Safety: Help Getting GAP Certified

USDA offers a user's guide to [Good Agricultural Practices \(GAP\)](#) and [Good Handling Practices Audits](#) from the Agricultural Marketing Service - as well as information about the audit process.

USDA, along with leaders from food and agriculture organizations, also support a free online tool, [On-Farm Food Safety Project](#), to help U.S. producers of all sizes achieve GAP harmonized standards and certification. This site helps farmers design a customized manual to meet GAP harmonized standards and certification requirements, including USDA GAP standards, and mitigate business risks by answering just a few questions.

Complying with USDA Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Regulations

New and small meat, poultry, or processed egg product producers with questions about inspection-related policies, programs, systems, and procedures can find resources through the Food Safety and Inspection Service's [Small Plant Help Desk](#).

For Organizations Supporting New Farmers and Ranchers

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

The [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#), administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, provides grants to organizations that train, educate, and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies, and other topics critical to running a successful operation.

Outreach Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Grants

Outreach Assistance for [Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers](#) and [Veterans Farmers and Ranchers](#) grants (formerly known as Section 2501 grants) provide funds to tribes, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations throughout the country to conduct training, outreach, and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and veteran farmers and ranchers.

AgrAbility

The [AgrAbility](#) program supports projects (led by State Cooperative Extension Services, in coordination with private, non-profit disability organizations) to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities.

Intertribal Agriculture Council's Technical Assistance Network

USDA works closely with the [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#) to promote the use of Tribal resources in Indian Country and facilitate the application process for USDA loans and grants.

Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant

The [Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant](#) program provides technical assistance to small, socially-disadvantaged agricultural producers in rural areas through eligible cooperatives and cooperative development centers.

Meet the Next Generation...

Military Veterans: the Next Generation of Organic Farmers



A veteran and participant in the Veterans Sustainable Agriculture Training program handles living basil at a certified organic hydroponic farm, which grows plants in water as opposed to soil. The program, started by decorated Marine Sergeant Colin Archibley, passes on agricultural knowledge to veterans to not only provide healing through farming but also to support them in starting their own agricultural enterprises.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).



Access to Land and Capital

Two of the biggest challenges facing new farmers and ranchers are access to land and capital. Capital needs range from buying the farm itself to buying important pieces of equipment or just establishing credit. USDA has tools that you can use when taking these first key steps.

To apply for USDA assistance, or to get more information, please visit a local USDA service center. Remember, some service centers do not offer all services. If you have any questions, please contact the service center before making the trip.

Loan Assistance

Often called the "lender of first opportunity," the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [makes and guarantees loans](#) (PDF, 3.5MB) to farmers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial lenders. You can use FSA loan funds to pay normal operating or family living expenses, purchase and develop farmland, and buy livestock and equipment.

Some loan programs provide targeted assistance for new farmers and ranchers, including:

Farm Service Agency Microloans

[Microloans](#) are direct farm operating loans with a shortened application process and reduced paperwork designed to meet the needs of smaller, non-traditional, and beginning operations.

Down Payment Program

FSA's Down Payment Program can assist beginning farmers in [purchasing a farm](#) (PDF, 253KB).

Youth Loans

FSA offers [youth loans](#) to individuals to establish and operate income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, FFA, and similar organizations. A Youth loan is available to young persons between the ages 10 and 20 years.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL)

FSA provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade [farm storage and handling facilities](#), including cold storage and wash-and-pack stations.

Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program

The [Transition Incentive Program](#) provides for the transition of expiring [Conservation Reserve Program](#) land from a retired or retiring owner or operator to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

Sale of Inventory Farmland Available for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

When available, FSA advertises [inventory farmland property for purchase](#). Beginning farmers are given first priority to purchase these properties at the appraised value.

Meet the Next Generation...

FSA Keeps Third Generation in the Dairy Business



When Eric Johnson finished high school, he didn't see cows in his future. "I wanted a new adventure and I wanted to try something different after being on the farm my whole life," said Eric. "I tried carpentry and later worked at a nursery as a landscaper laying paver patios and building rock walls." Landscaping didn't employ year-round so he began work at a large dairy. This is also how he met his wife Alison. "I enjoyed my work on the dairy farm and that's when I realized I missed working on the farm where I grew up," said Eric. Several years later, his dad, Harold, needed a new herd manager and offered Eric the job. He jumped at the chance.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).

FSA Loans Lend a Hand to California Farmer



Family adversity brought Sam Pesina back home to his family's Fresno County, Calif., farm. But it was the love of farming that kept him. When my dad got bone marrow cancer, there was never any question that I would return home, said Pesina. My dad wouldn't have trusted anyone else [to run the farm]. So he packed his bags, glanced back at the 12 years he spent in Hawaii working in finance and starting his own mortgage brokerage company, and headed back to Orange Cove to care for his father and the farm he grew up on.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).



Managing Risk

Agriculture is an inherently risky business. Some risks are everyday business risks; some risks are brought on by natural disasters. Producers need to regularly manage for financial, marketing, production, human resource, and legal risks.

USDA offers tools to assist producers as they meet these planning needs, including access to risk management tools, information regarding markets and risk, technical assistance coping with common risks, protection from the spread of animal and plant diseases and pests, and, when applicable, assistance recovering from disasters.



Crop Insurance

Through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, USDA provides crop insurance to American farmers and ranchers. There are many types of insurance available for a wide variety of production - and more are constantly being added.

For more information, please visit USDA's [Risk Management Agency \(RMA\)](#) Web site.

To locate a crop insurance agent near you, please visit RMA's [Agent Locator](#).

Producers can also utilize online tools to aid in [farm risk planning](#).

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

The [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#), or NAP, provides catastrophic-level risk protection to producers of commodities that do not have an insurance product available. NAP can provide assistance when natural disasters cause low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting.

Marketing Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) can [provide assistance managing the market risks](#) that you as a farmer or rancher face, including price loss and disparities faced by geographically-disadvantaged producers.

Disaster Assistance

In many circumstances, USDA's FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide assistance for losses resulting in natural disasters such as drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornadoes, pest infestation, and other calamities.

If you have experienced losses, you may be eligible to receive assistance from four programs administered by FSA.

- The Livestock Forage Disaster Program and the Livestock Indemnity Program provides payments to eligible producers for livestock deaths and grazing losses.
- The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have suffered losses because of disease, severe weather, blizzards and wildfires.
- The Tree Assistance Program provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

For more information, please visit the [FSA Fact Sheets](#) Web site.

Emergency Loans

FSA provides [loans to restore or replace essential property](#) damaged in the disaster, finance production losses to crops and livestock; fund essential family living and farm operating expenses, or refinance certain debts.

Disaster Set-Aside

[Disaster Set-Aside](#) can provide relief for producers who have direct loans with FSA and are unable to make the scheduled installment due, to move one full year's payment to the end of the loan.


Dairy

USDA's [Milk Income Loss Contract Program](#) (MILC) compensates dairy producers when domestic milk prices fall below a specified level. The MILC program is extended through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, is in place.


Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC)

[ARC and PLC offer financial assistance](#) for major row crops when either commodity prices or revenues are below certain levels. ARC and PLC are available for the following covered commodities: wheat, oats, barley, corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, and peanuts.

Ag Risk & Farm Management Library

USDA funds the web-based [Ag Risk and Farm Management Library](#) , which serves to organize thousands of materials to help agricultural producers and professionals quickly find the information you need on risk management, marketing, financial management and more.

Risk Management Education

USDA provides funds to the regional [extension risk management education](#)  centers that provide risk education and tools tailored for different regions of the country and types of operations, including important business planning tools.

Animal Health

USDA works in a variety of ways to protect and improve the health, quality, and marketability of our nation's [animals \(including various wildlife\)](#), [animal products](#), and [veterinary biologics](#).

Plant Health

USDA vigilantly protects agriculture and the environment against [pest and disease threats](#).

Conflicts with Wildlife

USDA's Wildlife Services are on hand to answer your questions about how to deal with problematic wildlife on your farm or ranch.

An office near you can be reached by dialing toll free: 1-866-4USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297)

Farming: A Generational Experience Backed by Crop Insurance

The Pederson family has been farming in North Dakota for three generations. Ryan Pederson and his family are very happy with farming and plan to keep the tradition going for future generations. In his youth, Ryan left the farm to go to college and graduate school. Now, Pederson, 37, a third generation farmer, and his wife, Jennifer, are raising their three young children, ages 6 years, 2 and a half years, and a 6-month infant, along with the crops that keep their family business going. Making sure they manage the risks of farming to ensure the fourth generation of their family farm is a priority.



Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

America's farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land. One of agriculture's biggest success stories is how producers have both protected and enhanced their environments, creating a wealth of resources for today's farmers and ranchers.

USDA has many tools available for new farmers and ranchers looking to carry on this legacy, including technical assistance, programs to help you invest in your land, and programs to help ensure the future of your farmland.

Conservation Assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to America's farmers and ranchers to help them implement voluntary conservation measures that benefit both the environment and the agricultural operations. NRCS has programs available to you as a new and beginning farmer that may provide up to 90 percent of the costs associated with implementing conservation practices and may also provide up to 50 percent in advance for the purpose of purchasing materials or contracting.

Financial Assistance:

The [Agricultural Management Assistance Program](#) (AMA) helps agricultural producers use conservation to manage risk and solve natural resource issues through conservation. NRCS administers the AMA conservation provisions while the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Risk Management Agency implement other provisions under AMA.

The [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance: the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Technical Assistance:

NRCS conservationists provide [technical expertise and conservation planning](#) for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who want to make conservation improvements to their land.

The [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.

Seasonal High Tunnels

[Seasonal High Tunnels](#) provide revenue opportunities while also promoting conservation for small and mid-sized farmers. They can extend the growing season, allowing more time for local marketing of produce and increasing sustainability while lowering energy and transportation inputs.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible to participate in a project area depending on the location and the projects selected. Interested farmers and ranchers should contact their local NRCS service center for more details.

Soil Health

A growing number of farmers are using [soil health management systems](#) to improve the health and function of their soil. NRCS is working hand-in-hand with these producers through technical and financial assistance programs and services to help ensure their success.

Conservation Assistance through the Farm Service Agency

USDA's Farm Service Agency administers the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP), a land conservation program. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production, instead planting species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) provides emergency cost-share assistance to farmers and ranchers to help rehabilitate farmland and rangeland damaged by natural disasters and to carry out water conservation measures during periods of severe drought.

FSA's loan programs, both direct and guaranteed, are also available for the purposes of conservation.

Meet the Next Generation...

With NRCS Help, Texas Man Gets Closer to Dream of Owning "Ranching Place"



With each swing of the ax and cut of the chainsaw, David Pi was clearing the way for his dream of one day having what he calls a "ranching place." In 2009, he bought 39 heavily wooded acres about an hour east of Houston that he envisioned opening up into pastures for the cattle he dreamed of owning one day.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).



Building Markets and Expanding Businesses

USDA has tools to help producers grow their businesses and build new markets for their products both here at home and abroad. These programs can help producers begin producing value-added products like pickles or jam, export their product overseas, or connect with their neighbors at a local farmers market or school.

Value Added Producer Grants

The [Value-Added Producer Grant program](#) can help farmers and ranchers develop new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income through the creation of value-added products.

Seasonal High Tunnels

[Seasonal High Tunnels](#) provide revenue opportunities while also promoting conservation for small and mid-sized farmers. They can extend the growing season, allowing more time for local marketing of produce and increasing sustainability while lowering energy and transportation inputs.

Local and Regional Food Systems

USDA has [many resources for new farmers](#) who are interested in producing and marketing local food, organized under the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative, including:

- [A list of USDA grants and loans](#) that can help farmers and food businesses selling locally.
- [Tools and resources](#) related to local and regional food systems from USDA and our federal partners.
- [The Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass](#), a guide and map to help you navigate USDA resources for local food systems. Search the map by keyword to find exciting projects that USDA has supported around the country related to your topic of interest, or find farmers markets, food hubs and meat processing facilities near you.

Accessing and Growing Farmers Markets and Other Local Food Opportunities

The [USDA National Farmers Market Directory](#) helps producers find new local marketing opportunities, including farmers markets and, soon, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, food hubs, and more.

The [Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program](#) supports development and marketing activities for farmers markets, food hubs, roadside stands, agri-tourism activities, and other producer-to-consumer markets.

Farmers' markets and direct marketing farmers are eligible to apply as retailers to redeem Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from recipients. Becoming authorized to accept SNAP is a win-win for both the farmer and the customer - SNAP recipients get access to healthier and fresher foods, and farmers and markets increase their customer base and their sales. Funding may be available for some markets and direct marketing farmers for the purchase of wireless equipment. To see if you qualify and/or begin the application process, please visit: <http://www.marketlink.org>

Organic Cost Share Assistance

Organic producers and handlers can be reimbursed for as much as [75 percent of the costs](#) for their organic certification, up to a maximum of \$750 annually. Through the Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program, \$1.5 million is available to organic operations in 16 States. Through the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, \$11.5 million is available to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories.

Grading, Certification, and Verification

The Agricultural Marketing Service's quality grade standards and its independent third-party, grading, certification, auditing, inspection, and laboratory analysis services are voluntary tools that producers can use to help promote and communicate quality and wholesomeness to consumers. These standards and services can help new farmers be more competitive in the evolving marketplace and access new market opportunities.

For example, the USDA Process Verified Program provides companies that supply agricultural products or services the ability to assure customers that they provide consistent quality products or services by allowing participants to use a ["USDA Process Verified" marketing shield](#) that verifies the marketing claims.

[AMS grading services](#) cover commodities from eggs to beef to fruits and vegetables. Many consumers are familiar with the "USDA Prime" and "USDA Choice" beef grades and recognize the value that the grade shields represent. Recently, AMS launched a [grass-fed beef certification program](#) specifically tailored to meet the needs of small and very small producers.

[AMS fruit and vegetable audits](#) for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices can help producers access commercial markets by verifying that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

AMS even administers export [certification and verification programs](#), which help producers meet foreign buyer requirements and access foreign markets for beef, dairy, eggs, pork, animal feed, and more.

Farm to School

Schools across the country are increasingly interested in buying lunchroom products from local or regional producers, and schools are often a good market for new farmers. [Farm to school grants](#) and technical assistance can help link farmers to schools. USDA can help you learn more about selling to local schools, including guidance and technical assistance, as well as results from our [Farm to School Census](#) showing what schools are buying now and what they would like to buy in the future.

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program

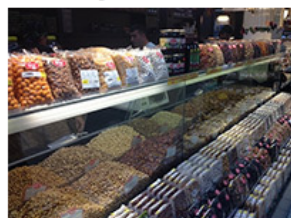
The [Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan program](#) offers low-interest financing to producers who are interested in developing infrastructure such as processing facilities and food hubs.

Apply for a Federal Grant of Inspection

For new farmers interested in producing a meat, poultry, or egg product, a [Federal Grant of Inspection](#) will enable you to sell your product in interstate commerce for resale.

Meet the Next Generation...

Teaching the World to Eat Pecans



Randy Hudson inherited a 20-acre pecan orchard and turned it into a business in 1981. He said those 20 acres gave his two sisters and him an opportunity to attend college, so he has an emotional tie to the land and business. His father was a county extension agent. Randy followed in his father's footsteps and parlayed an undergraduate soil science degree into a Ph.D. Then he parlayed the 20 acres into 1,500 and became president of the Georgia Pecan Growers Association. He had education and tradition, but what he didn't have was an expandable market for pecans. Dr. Hudson said they weren't making that much money until he took a chance and began to export his crop. Everything changed in the 1990s when the family introduced the pecan to new consumers in China.

Hudson Pecan Company was soon generating revenue of \$20 million annually by selling their own pecans and marketing for others.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).



Resources and Tools

USDA has 150-plus years of experience supporting new farmers and ranchers, and we are constantly adding new tools to support the next generation of agriculture.

Whether you are a veteran looking to begin a new type of service feeding a hungry world or a person who would like to support a new generation of agriculture, USDA can help you get started.



"It is key to support new and beginning farmers and ranchers. They are our future and we must do everything we can in the present to enable them to get started and to help them share in and grow the successes of American agriculture."
- Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden

USDA Welcomes Veterans to the New Farmers Web Site



Land Transfer Tools

USDA offers several tools to landowners who want to support a new farmer or rancher who needs access to farm land.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service [provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing agricultural land easements](#) that protect the agricultural use and conservation value of eligible land. In the case of working farms, this program can help farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture.

Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program

The [Transition Incentives Program](#) provides for the transition of expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land from a retired or retiring owner or operator to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. This program can provide annual rental payments for up to two additional years after the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Down Payment Program

Retiring farmers can utilize the Farm Service Agency's [Down Payment Program](#) to transfer their land to future generations.

Land Contract Guarantees

[Certain financial guarantees](#) (PDF, 257KB) are available to the seller of a farm through a land contract sale to a beginning farmer. The seller may request either of the following:

- Prompt Payment Guarantee: A guarantee up to the amount of three amortized annual installments, plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance.
- Standard Guarantee: A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

Meet the Next Generation...

Beginning Farmer Seeks Greener Pastures, Sustainable Future



When Sean Stanton started improving the pastures surrounding his small farm in Great Barrington, Mass., his efforts not only benefited the natural resources of this scenic southwest corner of Berkshire County, but also diners at a Manhattan restaurant.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).

Beginning Farmers Cattle Operation Benefits from Initiative for Underserved Farmers



For over a year, Mississippi retirees Percy and Emma Brown traveled 50 miles roundtrip three times a week from their home in Vicksburg, Miss. to their farm in Port Gibson in order to water their cattle. It was a time consuming process that involved filling up eight barrels with many gallons of water for the growing cattle herd. That all changed when the Browns, who were new to farming, heard about USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency that helps private landowners implement conservation.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).



Get Connected

USDA is available around the clock and around the globe to support farmers and ranchers as you get started and build your agricultural businesses. USDA is a vital part of new farmers and ranchers' team, striving to create ever-more modern, customer-friendly customer service and to reach customers in new ways.

Receive updates from USDA

Our [free e-mail alert service](#) allows you to receive important news and information as it becomes available.

Find a USDA Service Center

[USDA Service Centers](#) are located across the country, throughout the communities that they serve. They are a place where customers can access some of the most critical services offered by USDA - including financial assistance and conservation planning.

Note: Some service centers may not offer all services. Contact the center before making the trip if you have any questions.

Connect with Cooperative Extension

USDA and agricultural colleges around the country work together to support an extensive network of [state, regional, and county Cooperative Extension offices](#), which can help answer questions from new farmers and ranchers about their operations and common issues that they face. These offices also conduct workshops and educational events for the agricultural community.

Opportunities to Lead and Engage

The election of responsible agricultural producers to [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) county committees](#) is important to all farmers and ranchers. Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level and work to help FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

You can also be a voice for your industry and shape the future of agriculture by serving on a Research and Promotion Program Board. These programs, which are overseen by the Agricultural Marketing Service, focus on research, marketing, and consumer outreach efforts that improve, maintain, and develop opportunities for agricultural commodities. Funded by industry assessments, the programs allow stakeholders across an industry to pool their expertise and resources. Research and Promotion programs are run by a board or council whose members are nominated by the industry and then appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. There are 22 national [Research and Promotion programs](#) serving a variety of commodity industries, from eggs to soybeans, lumber to lamb.

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Opportunities to Lead and Engage

The election of responsible agricultural producers to [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) county committees](#) is important to all farmers and ranchers. Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level and work to help FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

You can also be a voice for your industry and shape the future of agriculture by serving on a Research and Promotion Program Board. These programs, which are overseen by the Agricultural Marketing Service, focus on research, marketing, and consumer outreach efforts that improve, maintain, and develop opportunities for agricultural commodities. Funded by industry assessments, the programs allow stakeholders across an industry to pool their expertise and resources. Research and Promotion programs are run by a board or council whose members are nominated by the industry and then appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. There are 22 national [Research and Promotion programs](#) serving a variety of commodity industries, from eggs to soybeans, lumber to lamb.

USDA has a number of [Federal Advisory Committees and Boards](#) that advise on a variety of issues ranging from emerging markets to animal health. These committees play an important role in shaping programs and policies of the government and the department. USDA is continuously seeking nominations for all advisory committees. Opportunities to serve are routinely available as the term of each member expires.

Ask the Expert

USDA maintains an [online knowledgebase](#) of "frequently asked questions."

Meet the Next Generation...

Iowa Veteran, Farmer and Local-Foods Advocate



Sonia Kendrick served in Afghanistan and upon her return was drawn to fighting hunger issues in Iowa through locally-grown food. Working closely with USDA Farm Service Agency and others, Kendrick has created a platform that not only provides access to fresh, healthy, and locally-grown food but also creates an opportunity for returning veterans.

For more, [read the entire blog](#).